

how you can help the watershed...

storm drains



Look along the curb on your street and find the nearest storm drain. It's **your direct connection to the Huron River!** Storm drains are an

important feature of our city landscape. During heavy rainstorms, the drains reduce flooding in streets and neighborhoods by transporting large volumes of water into the river system quickly. Filters are not installed in the drains because they would delay the passage of water. This means anything that goes down the storm drain ends up in the Huron River.

Storm drains are for rainwater only. Anything else that enters the river through the drain system is called **nonpoint source pollution.**

- Pollutants (such as fertilizers, automotive fluids, pet waste and sediments) **"hitch a ride"** to the nearest storm drain with water from sprinklers, snow melt and heavy rains. The next time it rains, take a look at the closest storm drain and consider ways to reduce the pollutants washing into the river system.
- Pollutants are **"direct dumped"** into the storm drain. For example, a person might pour used cleaning agents down the drain, or clean paint brushes or auto parts over the drain. In most cases people do not understand how the drain system works and a friendly explanation prevents future dumping. In rare cases, the dumping is intentional. Report illegal dumping immediately to prevent further water quality contamination and reduce potential cleanup costs.

Improve water quality right now. Keep storm drains for rainwater only!

To report...

Illegal dumping, contact the MDEQ Pollution Emergency Alert System, 800-292-4706

Flammable or hazardous spills, call the Fire Department at 9-1-1 immediately.

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- A. Keep garbage out of storm drains. Put litter in trash cans. Dispose of toxic substances properly. It's simple: **Don't dump it if you wouldn't drink it.**
- B. Make a clean sweep. **Use a broom, not a hose,** to clean drives and sidewalks.
- C. **Never fertilize right before a rainstorm.** It's a myth that rain will "drive fertilizers into the ground." Instead, the time and money you spent fertilizing your lawn is literally washed down the drain, where it becomes a significant water pollutant.
- D. **Keep your natural assets.** Soil, mulch and compost are the "riches" your plants thrive on, yet these same items become pollutants if they enter the storm drain system. **Design your gardens to prevent soil erosion.**
- E. **Landscape to retain rainwater.** Create small berms and depressions to hold water in gardens. Border your lawn with deep-rooted flowers and shrubs that soak up water and reduce runoff.
- F. **Pick up after your pet.** Double bag the waste and place it in the trash (if allowed in your community). Or flush pet waste down your toilet.



Remember: the storm drain is a direct connection to the river, intended for rainwater only.